


AIHS Policy and Procedure		
Doc #: PP - 2.1	Title: Complaints and Appeals	
Guidelines: 3.13		
Rev #: 4	Approved By: School Principal	Date: 14/05/2025

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1** To describe a formal policy and procedure for dealing fairly and consistently with feedback, complaints and appeals received. This policy and procedure also describes how the feedback is monitored and resolved.
- 1.2** To inform students, visitors and interested parties the route by which they can express a complaint and appeal or provide feedback.
- 1.3** To inform staff of this policy and procedure so that staff know what to do if a customer complaint, appeal or feedback is given.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1** This policy and procedure applies to all staff, employees, contractors and students of the School.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Complaint – An expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service or actions provided by the School, which may be raised formally or informally.


- Informal complaint – A concern or dissatisfaction expressed without following the official complaint process.
- Formal complaint – A concern or dissatisfaction submitted through the School's official complaint resolution process.

3.2 Appeal – A request to review and overturn a decision made by the School. Appeals may relate to, but are not limited to, the following matters:

- Outcome of assessment marks;
- Refusal of leave of absence/release letter/refund request;
- Intention to Report (ITR) for unsatisfactory course progress/non-payment/misbehaviour; or
- Decisions related to late enrolment.

3.3 Resolution – Plans or actions developed and mutually agreed-upon by the School and the complainant to address and resolve the complaint.

3.4 Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO) – Investigates complaints about problems that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private education and training in Australia. The legal basis for the Ombudsman role is the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Legislation Amendment Act 2011*, passed by the Australian Parliament on 21 March 2011. (Source: OSO website)

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4.0 Responsibilities


4.1 All Staff at ACA – Responsible for understanding this policy and procedure and knowing what to do when a customer feedback, complaint or appeal is received.

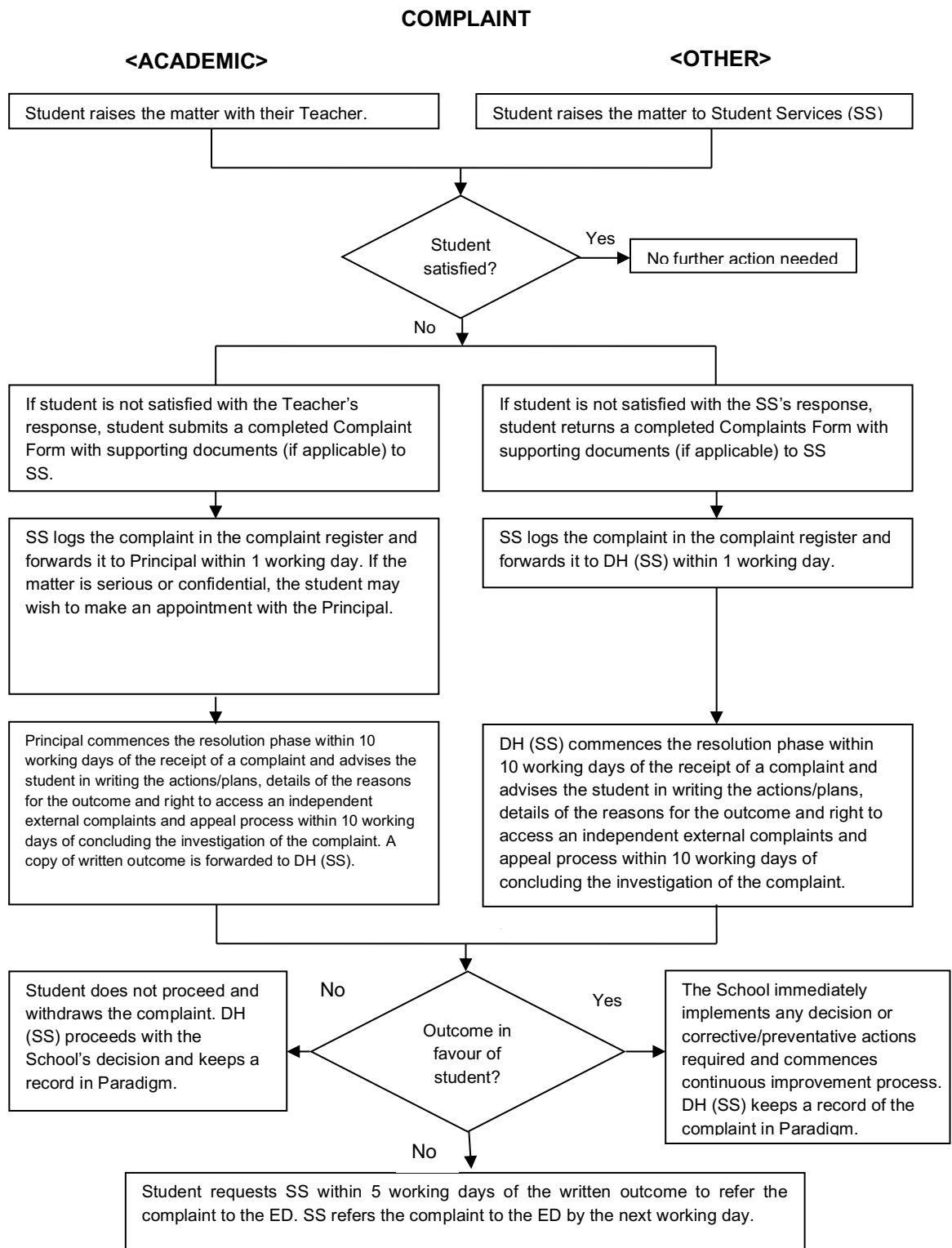
4.2 Designated Head (DH) – Student Services (SS), Marketing, and Principal /Executive Director (ED) – Responsible for ensuring that all feedback, complaints and appeals are dealt with fairly and timely.


4.3 Student Services (SS) Department – Responsible for communicating progress and outcome to students and logging and maintaining all records in student file and also in complaint/appeals login the feedback file.

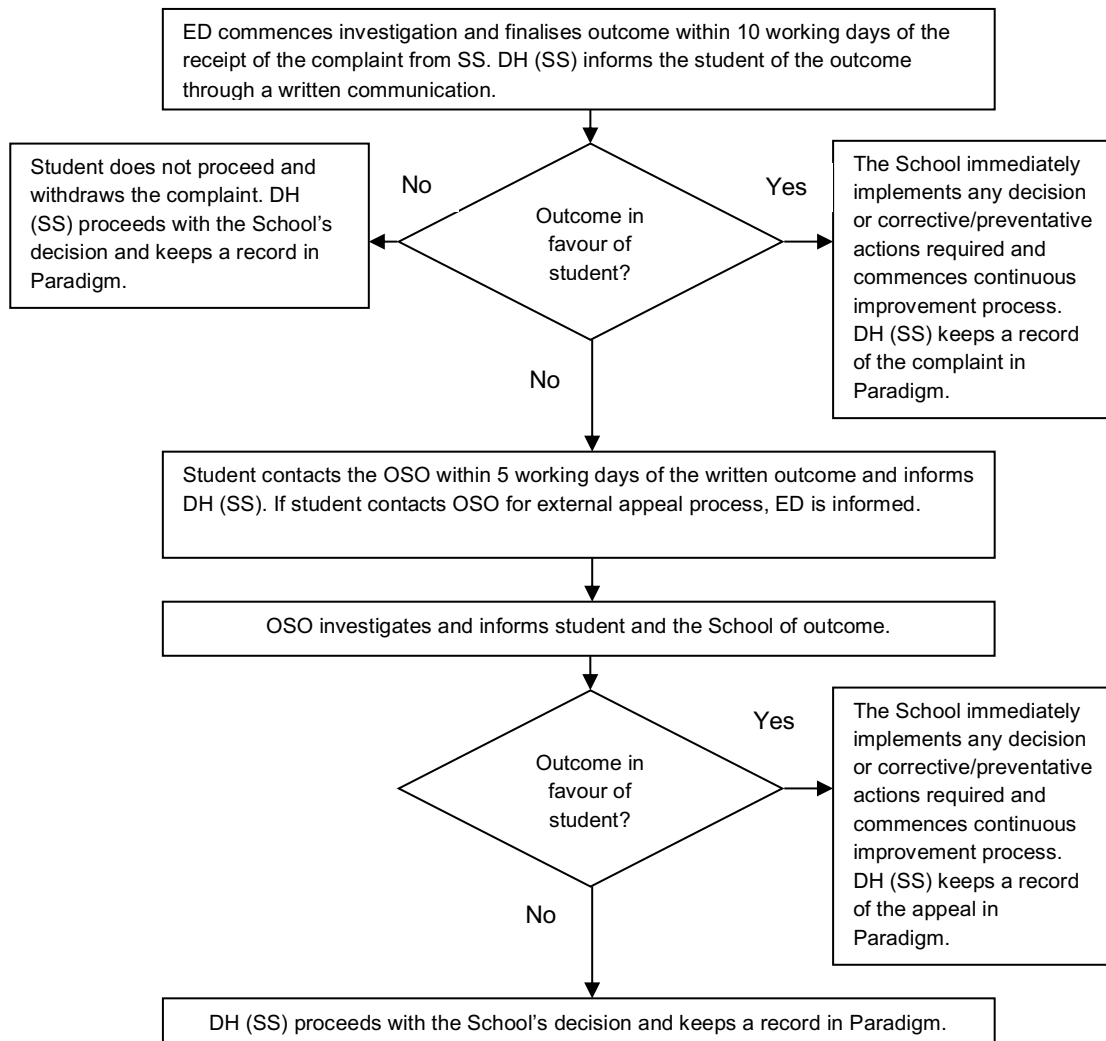
5.0 Procedure


5.1 Process Flowchart

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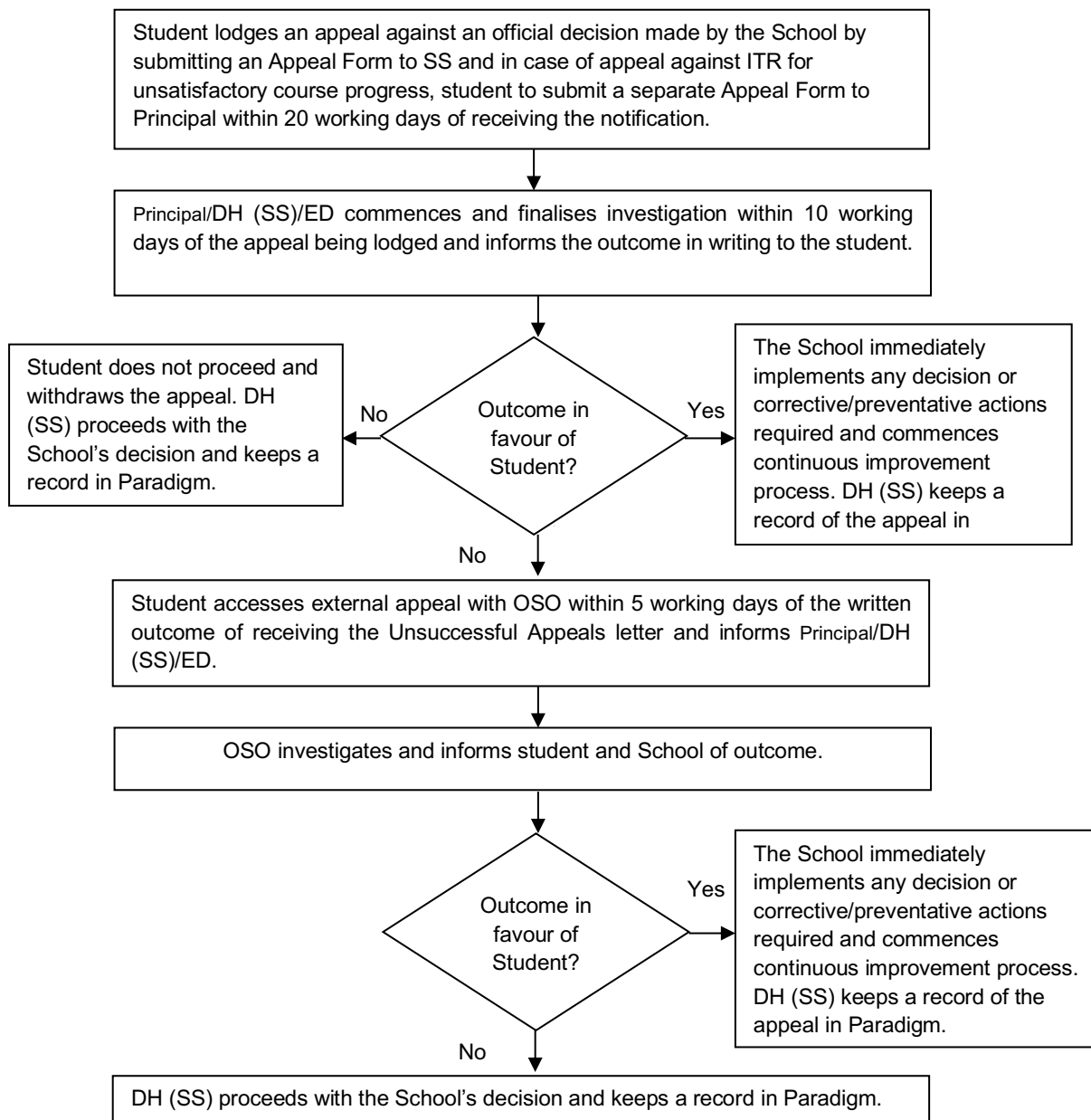



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APPEAL



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5.2 Flowchart Details

Sometimes students may have a complaint or be unhappy about a particular decision or action of the School or of a Teacher or other School staff members. For Academic complaints students should approach the Teacher or Principal. For any other issues, students should contact SS.

5.2.1 Complaint (A-Academic related and B-Other)

5.2.1.1.A In the first instance, students should raise the matter with their Teacher. There may have inadvertently been a mistake or misunderstanding which they can quickly rectify. Many problems can be resolved by the Teacher on the spot and the Teacher can give the student information which clears up the problem.

5.2.1.1.B For other complaints, student must raise the matter to SS.


5.2.1.2.A If the student is not satisfied with the Teacher's response or the matter is more serious, the student completes and returns the Complaint Form (available on the School website and at reception) to SS. The student should attach copies of any supporting documents (if applicable).

5.2.1.2.B If the student is not satisfied with the SS's response or the matter is more serious, the student completes and submits the Complaint Form (available on the School website and at SS) to SS. The student should attach copies of any supporting documents (if applicable).

5.2.1.3.A Upon receiving the Complaints Form with supporting evidence, SS immediately logs the complaint in the complaint register and forwards it to the Principal within 1 working day. If the matter is very serious or confidential, the student may wish to make an appointment with the Principal to give notice of the complaint.

5.2.1.3.B Upon receiving the Complaints Form with supporting evidence, SS immediately logs the complaint in the complaint register and forwards it to DH (SS) within 1 working day.

5.2.1.4.A Within 10 working days of the receipt of a formal complaint, the Principal will consider the information provided and may contact the student and/or Teacher/staff members if further information is required. The Principal shall, if they see fit, make a decision on the matter and advise the student and Teacher in writing the actions/plans, details of the reasons for the outcome and right to access an independent external complaints and appeal process within 10 working days of

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concluding the investigation of the complaint. A copy of written outcome is forwarded to DH (SS).

5.2.1.4.B Within 10 working days of the receipt of a formal complaint DH (SS) will consider the information provided and may contact the student and/or staff members if further information is required. DH (SS) shall, if he sees fit, make a decision on the matter and advise the student in writing the actions/plans, details of the reasons for the outcome and right to access an independent external complaints and appeal process within 10 working days of concluding the investigation of the complaint.


5.2.1.5 If the outcome is in favour of the student, the School immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process. DH (SS) keeps a record of the complaint in Paradigm as evidence of the communication to the student.

If the outcome is not in favour of the student, the student will choose either to withdraw the complaint or proceed further. If student proceeds, he/she must request SS within 5 working days of the written outcome to refer the complaint to the ED. SS refers the complaint to the ED by the next working day. If student does not proceed and withdraws the complaint, DH (SS) proceeds with the School's decision and keeps a record in Paradigm.

5.2.1.6 The ED commences investigation and finalises outcome within 10 working days of the receipt of the complaint from SS. Once the outcome has been finalised by the ED, DH (SS) informs the student of the outcome through a written communication including details of the reasons for the outcome.

5.2.1.7 If the outcome is in favour of the student, the School immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process. DH (SS) keeps a record of the complaint in Paradigm as evidence of the communication to the student.

If the outcome is not in favour of the student, the student will choose either to withdraw the complaint or access an independent external appeal process conducted by the OSO. If student proceeds, he/she must contact the OSO within 5 working days of the written outcome and inform DH (SS). If student contacts OSO for external appeal process, ED is informed. If student does not proceed and withdraws the

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complaint, DH (SS) proceeds with the School's decision and keeps a record in Paradigm.

5.2.1.8 OSO investigates and informs student and the School of outcome. The appeal procedure will be determined by the independent mediator. If required, all documentation from the student and the School related to the appeal will be forwarded to the independent body.

5.2.1.9 If the outcome of the external appeal is in favour of the student, the School immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process. DH (SS) keeps a record of the appeal in Paradigm as evidence of the communication to the student.

If the outcome is not in favour of the student, DH (SS) proceeds with the School's decision and keeps a record in Paradigm.


5.2.2 Appeal Against an Official Decision Made by the School

5.2.2.1 Student lodges an appeal against an official decision made by the School by submitting an Appeal Form to SS within 20 working days of receiving the notification.

In case of appeal against the School's intention to report for unsatisfactory course progress, student submit the appeal form to Principal within 20 working days of receiving the notification.

5.2.2.2 Staff responsible as per the type of appeal (Principal/DH (SS)/ED) commences and finalises investigation within 10 working days of the appeal being lodged. Staff will consider the information provided (if applicable) and information about the student in the Student Management System (Paradigm), and may contact the student if further information is required. Once the outcome has been finalised the student is informed in writing.

Types of Appeal	Person responsible
Assessment Marks	Principal
ITR for Course Progress	Principal
ITR for unsatisfactory attendance	Principal
ITR for Non-payment	SS, Department Head
ITR for Misbehaviour	Executive Director

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Refusal of Leave of Absence	Executive Director
Refusal of Release	Executive Director
Refusal of Refund	Executive Director
Late Enrolment	Principal

5.2.2.3 If the outcome is in favour of the student, the School immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process. DH (SS) keeps a record of the appeal in Paradigm as evidence of the communication to the student.

If the outcome is not in favour of the student, the student will choose either to withdraw the appeal or access external appeal process with the OSO. If student proceeds, he/she must contact the OSO within 5 working days of the written outcome and inform Principal/DH (SS)/ED. If student does not proceed and withdraws the appeal, DH (SS) proceeds with the School's decision and keeps a record in Paradigm.

5.2.2.4 OSO investigates and informs student and the School of outcome. The appeal procedure will be determined by the independent mediator. If required, all documentation from the student and the School related to the appeal will be forwarded to the independent body.


5.2.2.5 If the outcome of the external appeal is in favour of the student, the School immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process. DH (SS) keeps a record of the appeal in Paradigm as evidence of the communication to the student.

If the outcome is not in favour of the student, DH (SS) proceeds with the School's decision and keeps a record in Paradigm.

5.3 Complaints and Feedback from Parents, Guardians, and the Wider School Community

5.3.1 Intent and Applicability

AIHS is committed to fostering transparent, respectful, and responsive communication with its broader school community. This section outlines the external complaints and feedback process available to parents, legal guardians, carers, staff, community members, contractors, and other

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stakeholders who are not students. (Students are guided by a separate internal complaints and appeals procedure.)

This mechanism provides a structured and accessible way for stakeholders to raise concerns, provide constructive feedback, or submit formal complaints regarding school operations, services, staff conduct, or school policies.

5.3.2 Who Can Submit a Complaint

This external complaints procedure is available to all non-student individuals or groups connected to the school community, including but not limited to:

- Parents and guardians of students
- Extended family members or carers
- School staff and contractors
- Visitors, service providers, and community members

5.3.3 When to Submit a Complaint

This procedure should be used when:

- Efforts to resolve an issue informally have been unsuccessful
- A concern involves a serious or recurring matter
- You seek to provide formal feedback regarding school operations, services, or interactions with staff

Before submitting a formal complaint, it is encouraged that complainants:

- Attempt resolution with the relevant staff member or department where appropriate
- Review the school's policies related to the matter of concern
- Prepare any supporting documents or notes that can clarify the complaint


5.3.4 How to Submit a Complaint

Complaints or feedback can be submitted via the following channels:

- **Telephone:** Call the School Office at +61 2 9224 5500
- **In-Person Appointment:** Email Student Services (studentservices@academies.edu.au) to arrange a meeting with the appropriate staff member or the School Principal
- **Email:** Send formal complaint to info@academies.edu.au

Anonymous complaints may be submitted; however, the ability to investigate and resolve such matters may be limited if follow-up information is unavailable.

5.3.5 Who Manages Complaints

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- General complaints will be managed by the School Principal, who will coordinate investigation and response within a reasonable timeframe (usually within 10 working days).
- Specialised or sensitive complaints, including those involving the School Principal, will be referred to the Executive Director (ED) or another appropriate authority. Contact details can be requested via Student Services.
- All complaints will be logged, tracked, and responded to with professionalism and respect for confidentiality.

5.3.6 Confidentiality and Fairness

- The School will manage all complaints confidentially, with information shared only with those directly involved in the investigation and resolution.
- If a complaint involves another individual, that person will be given an opportunity to respond to any allegations made.
- Support persons (e.g. friend, relative, or interpreter) may accompany the complainant in meetings related to the complaint.
- The School encourages respectful communication and will not tolerate abusive or aggressive behaviour in the complaints process.

5.4 General Guidelines

- All correspondence to under 18 students will also be sent to their parents or guardians.
- If the School considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise student complaint or appeal, the School will inform student in writing the reasons as why more than 60 calendar days are required and will regularly update student on the progress of the matter.
- Nothing in this policy and procedure inhibits student's rights to pursue other legal remedies under Federal or State law. Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to other legal remedies.
- The School will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints and appeals process are ongoing.
- Students must also continue attending their classes during the complaint and/or appeal process.
- There is no cost to the complainant and/or appellant for utilising this complaint and/or appeal process.
- At all meetings, the student may have a support person present (at the student's cost). If the student is under the age of 18, the parent or guardian must also be present.

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- Student has the right to appeal a decision made by the School to report their unsatisfactory course progress based on the following grounds.
 - I. The School's failure to record or calculate a student's marks accurately,
 - II. Compassionate or compelling circumstances, or
 - III. The School has not implemented its intervention strategy and other policies according to its documented policies and procedures that have been made available to the student.


5.5 External Appeal

The student will have access and receive the outcome of only one external appeal process before the School may report the student to the relevant authorities. Hence the School does not have to await the outcome of multiple external appeal processes which the student may wish to access. However, the School will inform students that they could refer to the OSO. OSO offers a free and independent service for overseas students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their private education or training provider. You can initiate the external appeals process to OSO by telephone, in writing, by fax, or using OSO's online complaint form available at <https://forms.ombudsman.gov.au/prod?entitytype=Approach&layoutcode=ApproachWebForm>

Overseas Students Ombudsman
 GPO Box 442 Canberra ACT 2601
 Tel: 1300 362 072
 Fax: 02 6276 0123
 Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
 Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

5.6 Withdrawal of Complaint/Appeal

- 5.6.1** The student may withdraw a complaint or appeal at any time during the resolution process. The student must make the withdrawal in writing and submit it to the Student Services. This will then be forwarded to the DH (SS). Alternatively, the student may send an email to the DH (SS) using his/her email address that is registered with the School.
- 5.6.2** DH (SS) will send a written acknowledgement of the withdrawal to the student. The matter will be concluded and deemed to be resolved.

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5.7 Documenting Complaints/Appeals

5.7.1 The DH (SS) must keep records of the following, where applicable:

- Actions taken to address the root cause of complaint/appeal;
- Minutes of meetings at which actions arising from complaint/appeal were agreed on;
- Changes to systems and/or processes to address the inadequacy that led to the complaint/appeal or to improve operations.

5.7.2 DH (SS) will record the complaint and its resolution in the School's Complaints Register that will allow identification and detail of the following:

- Submission date of complaint;
- Nature and description of complaint;
- Date/s when cause of complaint occurred;
- Attachments (if applicable);
- Determined resolution including reasons for any decision;
- Date of resolution; and/or
- Date written statement of outcomes was sent to student.

5.7.2 The outcome of the complaint/appeal and the reasons for the outcome will be placed in the student file and on Paradigm.

5.7.3 DH (SS) will monitor and annually review the complaints and appeals as part of their continuous improvement process.

6.0 References

6.1 Management Review (Continuous Improvement) Policy and Procedure

7.0 Appendices

7.1 ACA Complaint Form

7.2 AIHS Appeal Form

7.3 ACA Complaints Register

7.4 ACA Unsuccessful Appeals Letter